

Guidelines for Higher Education Accountability Plans

September 2001

Executive Summary

As the state moves into the third biennium of an accountability system with goals and performance measures, it is critical to monitor the impact of these initiatives on students. The guidelines for the 2001-03 Biennium offer institutions the flexibility to develop strategies to address the needs of particular groups of students and to propose challenging targets on the performance measures mandated by the Legislature.

Authority for these guidelines is contained in the Operating Budget for the 2001-2003 Biennium (*Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6153, Section 601*):

“Each institution receiving appropriations under sections 604 through 609 of this act shall submit a biennial plan to achieve measurable and specific improvement each academic year as part of a continuing effort to make meaningful and substantial progress towards the achievement of long-term performance goal. The plans, to be prepared at the direction of the higher education coordinating board, shall be submitted by August 15, 2001. The higher education coordinating board shall set biennial performance targets for each institution and shall review actual achievements annually. Institutions shall track their actual performance on the statewide measures as well as faculty productivity, the goals and targets for which may be unique to each institution. A report on progress toward statewide and institution-specific goals, with recommendations for the ensuing biennium, shall be submitted to the fiscal and higher education committees of the legislature by November 15, 2003.”

Due to the short time between the effective date of the operating budget and the due date for the institutions' plans, agency staff requested and received an extension of the deadline for submission of the plans to October 10, 2001.

These guidelines set the framework for the Accountability Plans due October 10, from each of Washington's six public baccalaureate institutions. After receiving and reviewing these accountability plans, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) at its October 30 meeting, will set biennial intermediate performance targets for each institution for each of the four statewide accountability measures.

2001-2003 Accountability Plans

The accountability plans should be divided into two parts:

Part I. Strategies Implemented in 1999-2001

This section should summarize each institution's experience during the previous biennium through a brief description of the strategies used to affect the performance measures. These descriptions should provide the context needed to understand the strategies and targets proposed for the 2001-03 Biennium.

Part II. Baselines, Measures, Targets, and Strategies

This section should set baselines for institutional performance on both the statewide and institution-specific measures, propose challenging intermediate targets on all of the performance measures, and discuss institutional strategies for moving toward these targets and the statewide goals in the 2001-2003 Biennium.

1. **Baseline:** The baseline from which to assess “*measurable and specific improvement*” should be calculated on the basis of *the average of fiscal years 1997, 1998, and 1999.*
2. **Statewide performance measures:** The 2001-03 Appropriations Act maintained the statewide performance measures set in 1997. It also specified faculty productivity as an additional performance measure and indicated that institutions may set their own measures of and targets for faculty productivity. Institutions should continue the measures of faculty productivity used in their 1999-01 accountability plans or, where appropriate, refine those measures. The HECB expects that institutions will provide compelling reasons for changing their faculty productivity measures.
3. **Institution-specific measures:** As part of their “continuing effort to make meaningful and substantial progress,” institutions should continue to use and, where appropriate, refine the institution-specific measures of performance used in their 1999-01 accountability plans. The HECB expects that institutions will provide compelling reasons for changing their institution-specific performance measures.
4. **Statewide goals:** Institutions’ plans should continue to strive toward these performance goals:

<i>Accountability measure</i>	<i>Long-term performance goal:</i>
a. Undergraduate graduation efficiency index	
For students beginning as freshmen	95%
For transfer students	90%
b. Undergraduate student retention:	
Research universities	95%
Other public four-year institutions	90%
c. Five-year graduation rate	
Research universities	65%
Other public four-year institutions	55%
d. Faculty productivity	Institution-specific
e. Optional institution-specific measures	Institution-specific

5. **Intermediate targets and measurable and specific improvement:** Each institution shall propose challenging intermediate targets on all of the performance measures, and may introduce targets to address improvements in performance measures for particular groups of students (e.g., retention of freshmen). Institutions shall report annually on their progress toward these targets and progress toward the statewide performance goals.
6. **Strategies for the 2001-2003 Biennium:** Each institution should describe initiatives for the current biennium aimed at improving institutional performance on the statewide and institution-specific measures.
7. **HECB approval:** Staff will review institutions' proposed plans and work with institutions to resolve any questions. Plans should go forward to the Board for approval at the October 30, 2001 meeting.
8. **Annual report:** Annual reports to the Board describing achievement of the performance targets are due November 1 of each year. The reports should present the data and analyze the effect of the strategies implemented to date – what worked and didn't work, and why.

RESOLUTION NO. 01-30

WHEREAS, The Washington Legislature required institutions to prepare accountability plans at the direction of the Higher Education Coordinating Board and submit them to the Board by August 15, 2001; and

WHEREAS, The institutions have been granted an extension of this deadline to October 10; and

WHEREAS, The Higher Education Coordinating Board has prepared guidelines to help the institutions prepare accountability plans that will describe each institution's strategies for making meaningful and substantial progress toward the achievement of the Legislature's long-term performance goals;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board adopts these guidelines for the 2001-2003 Accountability Plans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board encourages institutions to identify student learning outcomes in all undergraduate academic programs, develop assessment projects in the areas of writing, quantitative skills, and technological literacy, and to report annually on their progress in those areas.

Adopted:

September 12, 2001

Attest:

Bob Craves, Chair

Kristianne Blake, Secretary